

A high-level monthly briefing on operations and activities at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory – Home of Science and Engineering Solutions. Work at the lab advances the Department's strategic goals in the areas of energy, environment, defense and science.

■ ENERGY – INEEL Scientist Receives Geothermal Energy Award

The Geothermal Resources Council, one of the world's premier geothermal associations with members from 20 countries, recently awarded its highest award to INEEL scientist Joel Renner – for his outstanding contributions to the Council and to the development of geothermal resources over his 34-year career. Renner was cited for his quiet leadership as the “man behind the curtain” and driving force for many of the Council's annual accomplishments. As the 23rd recipient of the annual award, Renner was recognized – among other things – for his involvement in the first nationwide geothermal resource assessment and for developing the Geothermal Technology Organization and the Department of Energy's Geothermal Technical Information web site.

■ ENVIRONMENT – Buried Waste Retrieval Project Moves Forward

The Department of Energy, state of Idaho and the EPA have reached agreement on a plan to retrieve selected buried waste later this fall from a portion of Pit 4 at the INEEL's Radioactive Waste Management Complex. The Pit 4 retrieval project, also known as the Accelerated Retrieval Project, will remove selected waste containing uranium, plutonium and americium. The project will also remove volatile organic compounds, which are the most mobile constituents in the waste. The retrieval of buried waste from Pit 4 will, to the extent practicable, contribute to the efficient performance of any long-term remedial action for cleanup of the Subsurface Disposal Area at the Radioactive Waste Management Complex.

■ DEFENSE – Former CIA Director Visits Idaho

The INEEL recently launched its National Security Seminar Series with a presentation by James Woolsey, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency. National security has been a key mission at the INEEL since its inception. The events of 9/11, however, have catapulted INEEL national and homeland security programs into national and international prominence. The Seminar Series is intended to bring important speakers to Eastern Idaho to address issues of global importance and create a dialogue among laboratory scientists and area professionals. Several hundred guests attended the standing-room-only event.

■ SCIENCE – Expo Event Draws Thousands

Some 70 science and technology exhibits, demonstrations and activities spilled out of the Museum of Idaho, into the Big Top Tent, onto the plaza and across the street to the O.E. Bell Building for the fourth annual INEEL Science and Engineering Expo, Sept. 23-25. An estimated 10,000 people – more than 6,000 were students – came to be immersed in the carnival of events. Auroras and atoms, electricity and engineering, petroleum and propane, and water and wind power stimulated their senses. Visitors spotted the sun with astrophysicists, “saw” heat and energy, controlled robots, learned about fish in a Rocky Mountain oilfield, compared sizes of a glider and unmanned aerial vehicle, talked with NASA and energy experts, and heard the loud “whoosh” of a hot air balloon being inflated. The Expo piqued curiosities, satisfied the inquisitive and exposed a new generation to the wonders of science and scientific careers.

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